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## The Editor's Page

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**W**ANTED—A world in which men can trust and hope. This is the supreme need of our time. The orgy of hatred and violence through which we have just passed broke the power of the old sanctions. Religion suffered along with all other interests. For religion was summoned to support and to defend a war in which, as Dean Inge says, "We were all mad together."

**What has religion to offer in this crisis?** Apparently the leaders in our Christian world are by no means agreed. It is a time of ferment in the realm of religion as truly as in the realms of economics and politics. Yet although the voices are confused and even contradictory, there is a pathetic yearning in the hearts of distressed men and women for the spiritual reinforcement which religion can give. Religion has always endeavored to create a deep and enduring faith which steadies the soul in times of struggle and uncertainty. Such a life we need today. Professor Tufts's article in this issue is worth reading on this point.

**Shall religion look backward or forward?** There was once a time when Christianity officially dominated all civilization. Learning, politics, industry, were all looking to the church for guidance. Theology was the queen of all the sciences. Would not the reinstatement of this authoritative religious control today immediately dissipate the clouds of dissension and doubt? Such is undoubtedly the conviction of a large number of religious leaders. It is expressed in militant divisive fashion by those "fundamentalists," who would, if

they could, exclude from positions of leadership all who do not subscribe unequivocally to a creed aggressively hostile to modernism. It is expressed in irenic fashion by certain advocates of church unity who are concerned primarily to restore a single authoritative church. These men feel that if the divisions now existing in Christendom could be abolished, Christianity would be able to speak with something like the old power. Both these movements are looking backward. They would cure our ills by reinstating a religious program of the past.

**The historical interpretation of religion** furnishes quite a different ideal. Historically we discover that religions are always growing. The very rites and ceremonies and doctrines which seem to us fixed originated in a creative effort to give expression to living needs. These religious forms undergo a real evolution in connection with an evolving culture. If we view religion historically, we shall be concerned not so much with the perpetuation of its past forms as with its ability to interpret and inspire our own generation. Religion should be creative rather than merely authoritative.

**The Christian Union movement**, when judged in the light of the above, raises several pertinent questions. Can religion serve the interests of our day unless it is free to experiment? Can it inspire with confidence a forward-moving world if it has no solutions to suggest save those already conventionalized in the past? Greatly as the unified influence of Christianity is to be desired, it is even more desirable that such an influence should be something more than a sense

of restraint. Religion ought to be at least as much concerned with the faith of our children as with the faith of our fathers. Is it as ready to study what the coming generation says as it is to declare what past generations have said? The three discussions of church unity in this issue will repay careful study.

**The new method of studying the New Testament**, outlined in Mr. Willoughby's article, is directly in line with the above-mentioned quest for a creative interpretation of religion. We have for so long used the New Testament as a book of dogmas that we have almost forgotten that it was originally the literature of an adventuresome creative religious movement. When this fact comes to be more generally appreciated, the New Testament will be as Sabatier suggested, "the charter of the Religion of the Spirit."

**Can mysticism be counted on to reinforce a creative religion?** Professor Hocking, one of the most ardent interpreters of mysticism in our day, has declared that religion is essentially creative and fruitful. Professor Haydon's article gives a comparative display of mystic utterances, showing that the mystic experience is the creative coefficient of all sorts of conceptions. The mystic has too often been regarded as a being detached from practical considerations. But, if Professor Haydon be right, there is no reason why the ardor of mysticism may not be employed in the service of a practical reconstruction of religion. Those who believe profoundly in the spiritual possibilities of a forward-looking faith are as mystical as those who seek to attach their lives to a changeless Absolute.

## WHO'S WHO in this issue of the Journal?

*James Hayden Tufts* holds the chair of Philosophy in the University of Chicago, and is an authoritative ethical interpreter of present social issues. *George Cross* is professor of Christian Theology in Rochester Theological Seminary, and author of *What Is Christianity* and other works. *Paul Hutchinson* is an influential missionary of the Methodist Episcopal denomination in China. *S. W. Dyde* is principal of Queen's Theological College, Kingston. *Harold R. Willoughby* is a graduate student in the University of Chicago. *A. Eustace Haydon* holds the chair of Comparative Religion in the University of Chicago.

## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

*Can Christianity Welcome Freedom of Teaching?* A group of articles will deal with the present attempt to control the teaching of colleges and universities in the interests of orthodox doctrine. The history of this campaign, its legal aspects, and its significance for religion will be set forth.

Other articles of interest are:

*The Dilemma of Social Religion*, by Professor Clarence M. Case, of the University of Iowa.

*The Intellectual and Social Crisis in China*, by President F. L. Hawks Pott, of St. John's University, Shanghai.

*The Religion of the Manichees*, by Professor F. C. Burkitt, of Cambridge University, England.

The usual comprehensive survey of recent publications will appear.